

THE BUFFALO NEWS

Solving a mystery is only part of the attraction at 3600 Escape



From left, Sarina Divan, 17, Timmy Finley, 18, Morgan Awner, 18, and Rachel Qiao, 17 work together to try and find clues in one of the rooms at 3600 Escape on Hertel Ave. in Buffalo on Tuesday, March 28, 2017. (Robert Kirkham/Buffalo News)

By [Sarina Divan](#)

Published Wed, Apr 12, 2017

Picture this: You're trapped in a small room, and you only have an hour to escape. You are given a few clues, and nothing else.

It sounds kind of like a horror movie, but at 3600 Escape, it's the main attraction.

3600 Escape provides a one-of-a-kind experience, combining a captivating hour in an escape room with a personality and problem-solving style assessment. Participants are given 60 minutes – 3600 seconds – in a small room to piece together clues and solve the underlying mystery.

3600 Escape offers two rooms: one in which participants attempt to solve a conspiracy theory, and the other in which participants search for a hidden diamond in a mine. While in the room, four to eight participants must collaborate to solve the clues they are given in order to get to the bottom of the mystery.

Afterwards, participants' actions in the escape room are assessed to reveal information about their problem-solving preferences, an aspect of the experience that is unique to 3600 Escape.

Erica Swiatek, the owner of 3600 Escape, facilitates both the escape room experience and the personality assessment. Swiatek holds a Master's in Creative Studies from Buffalo State College, and is certified in FourSight, Myers-Briggs, and DiSC assessments, which she uses in the assessment portion of 3600 Escape. She hopes to combine play, learning, and creativity at 3600 Escape.

Participants are given a personality assessment prior to entering the escape room. Once in the room, Swiatek uses the assessment to watch the participants for actions that align with their problem-solving preferences. A separate gamemaster watches as well, monitoring and giving clues when necessary.

"The companies and the people who have done [the escape room] have really benefitted from it," Swiatek said. "There's something sticky about when you play and learn about how and why you played that way."

The overall escape room experience does not end up being what most people envision before trying it. While many people are concerned about being in such a small space, Swiatek has never had anyone have to leave the room due to that.

Rachel Qiao, Morgan Awner and Timmy Finley, seniors at Williamsville East High School, successfully solved the mine escape room at 3600 Escape and did the FourSight assessment, which led to conclusions about their problem-solving skills. They all agreed that the escape room was much harder than they expected it to be.

"I went in thinking it would just be easy brain teasers, but it ended up being really hard," Morgan said. "There were some clues that we picked up and just had no idea where to begin."

While in the small room, participants are originally presented with a few clues, which are pieced together to find other clues and eventually lead to escape. Swiatek emphasizes that collaboration and communication among participants is essential; otherwise, clues may not be connected.

"It definitely encouraged us to work together and communicate with each other, even though we all have different ways of approaching problems," Rachel said. "Our differences were what helped us solve the puzzles."

3600 Escape has been receiving most of its business from groups of friends, but in the future, Swiatek hopes to engage more companies and schools in the team-building process. Through the personal assessment, people can learn how to hone their own problem-solving preferences and work well with people who have different preferences. Working with others is essential in nearly every career, and the takeaways from 3600 Escape can promote teamwork.

3600 Escape not only provides an exciting experience for participants, but it can truly help people develop a better understanding of the way their mind works. The escape room is not a typical form of entertainment, and it can be a fun way to spend a night with friends.

"Unlike all the usual types of entertainment, like social media and television," Timmy said, "it actually required us to think, and that was refreshing."

Sarina Divan is a senior at Williamsville East High School.

Link: <http://buffalonews.com/2017/04/12/solving-mystery-part-attraction-3600-escape/>